

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 03000 130830Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 IO-13 TRSE-00 /075 W

-----130925Z 050777 /10

R 130757Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3235

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3000

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT KS

SUBJ: TIMING FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BY-ELECTION AND SPECIAL  
SESSION DISCUSSED

SUMMARY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP IS BEGINNING TO DISCUSS  
EXPECTED BY-ELECTION FOR VACANT SEAT IN CHONG-RO DISTRICT.

END SUMMARY

1. DRP ASSEMBLYMAN CHANG KI-YONG'S DEATH APRIL 11 MEANS ROK  
WILL HAVE TO HOLD BY-ELECTION FOR CHONG-RO DISTRICT'S TWO SEATS  
SOMETIME BETWEEN NOW AND JULY. OTHER CHONG-RO SEAT WAS VACATED  
WHEN MYONGDONG DEFENDENT AND NDP ASSEMBLYMAN CHUNG IL-HYONG  
WAS RECENTLY REMOVED FROM ASSEMBLY AS RESULT SUPREME COURT  
VERDICT AGAINST HIM. ROKG IS CONSTITUTIONALLY REQUIRED TO HOLD  
ELECTION WITHIN 90 DAYS OF SPEAKER'S NOTIFICATION OF DOUBLE  
VACANCY TO GOVERNMENT, AN ACTION WHICH IN TURN MUST OCCUR  
WITHIN 15 DAYS OF SUCH VACANCY. (AS IN KIM OK-SUN CASE, IF ONLY  
ONE ASSEMBLYMAN PER DISTRICT LOSES HIS SEAT, THERE IS NO  
CONSTITUTIONAL NEED FOR BY-ELECTION.)

2. INTEREST IN ELECTION LIKELY TO BE SUBSTANTIAL BECAUSE  
IT IS FIRST SINCE 1973 AND WILL BE WATCHED CLOSELY AS  
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INDICATOR OF PUBLIC REACTION TO GOVERNMENT POLICIES. GOVERN-  
MENT OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED SOME NERVOUSNESS ABOUT BY-  
ELECTION, SINCE CHONG-RO DISTRICT IS CONSIDERED OPPOSITION  
HOT-BED -- MANY OBSERVERS STILL CONTEND HANKOOK ILBO  
FOUNDER AND PUBLISHER CHANG'S ELECTION WAS RIGGED -- AND  
GOVERNMENT NOW FACING MORE DIFFICULTIES THAN IN PAST.  
AS WE HAVE BEEN REPORTING, CAMPUS AND OTHER OPPOSITION FEELING

IS RUNNING AT HIGHER LEVEL THIS PRING THAN DURING PAST TWO YEARS AND WHILE NDP REMAINS FACTIONALIZED THERE IS STRONG COMMON DESIRE AMONG MEMBERS TO PROVIDE GOOD ANTI-GOVERNMENT SHOW IN ORDER TO REFURBISH PARTY IMAGE. MAJOR CONCERNS REGARDING PROJECTED U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL SHARED BY ALL KOREANS IS MORE OF AN UNKNOWN FACTOR BUT COULD BE IMPORTANT. A COMPLICATING FACTOR FOR BOTH GOVERNMENT AND NDP MAY BE CAMPAIGN BY DUP SPLINTER PRTY LEADER YANG IL-TONG. YANG WHO NOT NOW ASSEMBLY MEMBER IS REPORTEDLY ANXIOUS TO RUN.

3. TIMING OF ELECTION NOT YET KNOWN BUT WILL DEPEND ON ROKG'S EVALUATION OF ABOVE FACTORS AS WELL AS TIMING FOR ANNUL SPECIAL SPRING SESSION OF ASSEMBLY, WHICH NOW ALSO BEING DEBATED. WE ANTICIPATE ROKG WILL WAIT AT LEAST MONTH OR TWO WHEN CAMPUS SITUATION EXPECTED TO BE MOE SETTLED.  
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**Review Markings:**  
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